

J. A. Walker's Early History of Edwards  
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Edited by JAMES C. MALIN

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## I. INTRODUCTION

THERE are occasional instances where an early historical sketch of the beginnings of a community are of sufficient importance to justify reprinting. The one offered here fits the test—J. A. Walker's "Sketch of the History of Edwards County, Kansas."<sup>1</sup> In many respects the history was excellent and served as a source of supply for local historians for some time thereafter.<sup>2</sup> Necessarily, however, as the settlement had been in existence only five years, anything written so close to the events was lacking in perspective, but on the other hand, it preserved facts that almost certainly would otherwise have been lost completely. In fact, few Kansas communities have had the good fortune to have such a history written within five years of the beginnings. The years 1877 and 1878 offered a first false promise of prosperity to the pioneers who had come just prior to the panic of 1873, and whose cup of adversity had been filled to overflowing by drought and grasshoppers. Obviously Walker was writing for booming purposes and certain reticences were desirable concerning the starving period and local political frauds. For the modern reader it seems helpful therefore to provide some additional information by way of giving a setting for this pioneer account.

J. A. Walker, the author of the first history of Edwards county, was forty-three years of age when he came to Kansas in the spring of 1873. Born in New Hampshire, he had married a Vermont-born woman, but had lived in Massachusetts, which was the birthplace of his five children. He entered a soldier's homestead on Section 14, Township 24, Range 19, but supplemented his income by holding local office: Assessor of Kinsley township in 1875 and county clerk under the original county organization. On his farm he sowed seven and one-half acres of winter wheat in the fall of 1874 and twelve acres of corn in the spring of 1875. Two mules provided his farm power and two cows contributed to the support of the family.<sup>3</sup>

1. Published first in the *Edwards County Leader*, Kinsley, March 14, 28, 1878, under the title, "Views of Kinsley and Vicinity, and a Sketch of the History of Edwards County, Kansas." The views (pictures) are not reproduced here.

2. The *Kinsley Republican*, January 4, 1879, a rival paper, reprinted the most of the history, with some variations and without giving credit to Walker.

3. "Kansas State Census," Edwards county, 1875, in Archives division of the Kansas State Historical Society.

The Kansas climate has ever been a subject of discussion, but Walker kept careful records of rainfall at Kinsley from May, 1876, to November, 1877.

## RAINFALL AT KINSLEY

May, 1876 .....	Rain fell on 5 days .....	Total, 5.55 inches
June .....	4 .....	2.75
July .....	4 .....	0.75
August .....	8 .....	2.50
September .....	4 .....	2.62
October .....	6 .....	2.25
November .....	5 .....	0.42
December .....	0 .....	0.00
January, 1877 .....	2 .....	0.38
February .....	2 .....	0.56
March .....	0 .....	0.00
April .....	8 .....	3.55
May .....	8 .....	8.73
June .....	8 .....	4.19
July .....	3 .....	1.25
August .....	5 .....	2.75
September .....	5 .....	1.00
October .....	6 .....	4.06
November .....	3 .....	0.73 <sup>4</sup>

The rainfall of 1879 and 1880 was not as favorable, however, and much of the population migrated, among them Walker, who became an emigration agent of the Northern Pacific railroad, assigned to his native New England.<sup>5</sup>

In describing the beginnings of Kinsley a conspicuous place was given by Walker to the Chicago workingmen's colony and particularly to the Massachusetts colony, of which he was a member, sent out by the Homestead and Colonization Bureau of Boston. A more idealistic experiment was that of the Fraternal Home and Land Association of Philadelphia under the leadership of a Prof. J. R. Wentz, who arrived with his first contingent March 5, 1877, and established the seat of the colony, Freemansberg, southeast of Kinsley across the river and the main ridge of sand hills. Two other groups came in April and May, after which there were no further records of arrivals.<sup>6</sup> The colony was designed upon some kind of mutual or coöperative plan by which Wentz thought workingmen with small capital might succeed in agriculture, but the details were not explained sufficiently in the local press to be enlightening. A

4. *The Valley Republican*, Kinsley, December 8, 1877.

5. *Kinsley Graphic*, January 1, 1881.

6. *Edwards County Leader*, April 12, May 17, 1877.

large colony house, 24 by 40 feet, with an ell wing 14 by 24 feet, was built by the first party. Plans were announced later for the building of sod houses, plastered inside and outside with lime, a means of overcoming the absence of timber on the plains for building materials and of giving more permanence than the ordinary unprotected sod house of the short grass country. The outcome is not known, as the press did not report further on this proposal. Wentz hoped to secure a steam plow for the use of his colony, but apparently failed. In fact, within a very short time the whole project collapsed, but here again the local press failed to report, and posterity is left without information on what became of the people who had been brought out from the Far East. It is even unknown whether there were any substantial number of city workingmen. The most interesting aspect of the experiment was the recognition at the outset, even though unsuccessful in their solution, of three of the most important problems involved in the adaptation of agriculture to the plains: A device to make available the advantages of adequate capital to the small farmer, native building materials which would free the plains from economic vassalage to the humid, timbered country, and mechanical farm power.

Other projects mentioned in the local papers were a Baltimore workingmen's association, and a French Catholic colony, but there is no evidence that any settlers were ever brought out under their auspices.<sup>7</sup> More tangible were German colony associations credited to St. Louis, Cincinnati and western New York, and to the advertising activities of the German Emigration Society of Edwards county.<sup>8</sup> The German settlements were mostly in the western and southern parts of the county, the first Germans being the Plags, father and sons, who settled south of Kinsley. The Kinsley *Graphic*, May 4, 1878, discussed the colony question in an editorial, saying that "as a rule they are successful failures. That is, as failures they are a success." This generalization was qualified only by admission of a limited success of colonization among Germans.

The organized-colony idea was a type of social idealism which was attractive to many people of that decade who were interested in social reform and the betterment of the condition of the poorer classes. Many of these schemes were designed to facilitate the migration of industrial workingmen of the East to Western agricultural lands.

7. For announcements see *ibid.*, September 18, 1877, and *The Valley Republican*, Kinsley, January 26, 1878.

8. *The Valley Republican*, Kinsley, November 10, December 15, 1877; January 6, 1878. *Edwards County Leader*, Kinsley, October 4, 1877; February 11, September 5, 1878. *Kinsley Graphic*, September 7, 1878.

The Chicago and Massachusetts enterprises were launched in 1872, prior to the panic and depression which began in 1873, but neither transplanted industrial workers. The Chicago association appears not to have sent any settlers except the location committee, and the Massachusetts colonists were mostly farmers. After the depression set in there is no record of additional colonists sent out by the Massachusetts organization and later census records show that very few came from that area. None of the projects originating in the depression period resulted in migration. Exceedingly few individual settlers came during the depression period proper. This is only another historical illustration of the fact that the frontier did not serve as a safety valve through which the problems of recurrent American depressions were solved. On the contrary, the evidence of population movement is conclusively in the opposite direction, and the locals in the Kinsley newspapers made frequent mention of the return to the East of those who turned their faces toward their old homes.

The establishment of the neighboring town of Offerle near the western edge of the county was mentioned by Walker. Lawrence Offerle and his sons were among the most influential, if not the dominant members in the early life of the community, operating a general store as well as agricultural enterprises. The post office called Belpre near the eastern edge of the county was established as early as 1879, but the town was not laid out until the railroad was built south of the river in 1886. The origin of Nettleton is not indicated, but during the winter of 1876-1877 John Fitch, of Hyde Park, Ill., settled there and undertook to promote the place in a big way. His house, intended for a hotel, was reported to have been 28 by 42 feet and three stories above a full basement, and illuminated by gas manufactured on the premises. A three-story mill was built, with equipment for grinding flour, feed and for shelling corn. The plan was to use wind power, but the windmill was supplemented by a steam engine. In 1877 Fitch raised corn, barley, millet, sweet potatoes, cabbage, tomatoes and other products, and became postmaster and railroad station agent. There seemed to be no limit to his ambitions and energy. Disaster pursued him, however, his wife dying in March and he being killed in an accident in July, 1878. His estate was liquidated the following year and Nettleton (Fitchburg) soon fell into obscurity.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9.</sup> *The Valley Republican*, Kinsley, November 3, 1877; January 12, March 30, 1878. *Edwards County Leader*, Kinsley, September 20, December 20, 1877; March 7, August 15, 1878. *Kinsley Republican*, February 15, 1879.

As most of the county lay south and east of the Arkansas river, the bridging of that stream was an essential public improvement. The bonds were voted by the county July 29, 1876, and the structure was reported completed in March, 1877. The contractors had used timbers shorter than specified in the contract, and defective material, even after it had been condemned, had been built into the bridge. The county declined to accept the bridge until alterations had been made to increase its strength and efficiency, and until concessions had been made in the cost.<sup>10</sup> In a later report the county commissioners stated that of the \$12,000 worth of bonds voted, \$9,000 had been sold at  $87\frac{1}{2}$  net, yielding \$7,875, of which \$484.13 was still on hand.<sup>11</sup> The weakness of the bridge was not remedied in full, evidently, because in March, 1881, eleven of the twenty spans were washed out, requiring another \$2,000 to make repairs and reopen it to traffic.<sup>12</sup>

The brick school building at Kinsley was constructed of local materials and was a source of pride when it was built at the cost of \$1,400. At first only two rooms were finished; the undivided second floor, 35 by 50 feet, was used as a public hall. On April 30, 1877, the women of the community celebrated the completion by holding a community supper, social and dance.<sup>13</sup> During the first term only the east room on the main floor was used, but before the winter passed, complaints were made because of crowding 75 children into one room, and the school was closed February 1 for a two months' vacation, during which the school board proposed to seat and furnish the west room. On April 1 a three months' spring term was scheduled to open.<sup>14</sup> School teaching must have been a relatively strenuous profession in those days as some of the children carried firearms and practiced using them during recesses and on the way to and from school. The editor of the *Republican* protested in June, and again in September, 1878, appealing to the parents for coöperation in terminating the practice and warned that in case of failure arrests would follow.<sup>15</sup>

City pride in the school building was soon dissipated when the walls cracked and crumbled. In 1887 it was torn down, the local

10. *Edwards County Leader*, Kinsley, March 29, 1877.

11. *Ibid.*, August 2, 1877.

12. *Kinsley Graphic*, March 5, July 23, 1881.

13. *Edwards County Leader*, Kinsley, April 19, May 3, 1877. Walker's history gave the size of the building as 35 by 46 feet, and stated that there were four rooms. Possibly the upper rooms were finished the second year.

14. *The Valley Republican*, Kinsley, January 10, February 2, 1878.

15. *The Kinsley Republican*, September 21, 1878.

paper commenting that the work was proceeding rapidly because the bricks were loose from the mortar:

The tearing down of the old central school building discloses a rascally piece of work on the part of the contractor who built it. Thousands of brick in the walls never were burned at all. They are simply mud bricks. . . . Anyone who will put such brick in the walls of a public school building deserves a term in the legislature.<sup>16</sup>

Of the eighty-five families in Edwards county in 1875, seventy-five had taken land and, according to occupation, the landed families were distributed as follows: Fifty-two farmers; five carpenters; three painters; nine other trades represented by one each (hotel-keeper, lawyer, mason, millwright, shoemaker, surveyor, clerk, chair-maker, railroad agent) and six with no occupation designated.<sup>17</sup> Of the ten families in the county without land, two were listed as farmers, five other trades represented by one each (railroad agent, printer, bricklayer, carpenter, painter) and three with no occupation designated.

According to land tenure, of the seventy-two for whom records are available, twenty-six (about 36%) had made preëmption entries, five (about 7%) homestead entries, thirty-seven (about 51%) soldiers' homestead entries, two timber claim entries, and three men apparently had bought land outright. In one case a man had filed on both a soldier's homestead and a timber claim. Conspicuously, these first settlers took government, not railroad land, and therefore it was the liberal land laws and particularly the soldiers' homestead law that served as the original attraction in this particular instance. The further indication of the drift of land occupation was announced from time to time by summaries of locations made by the local real-estate agents. Thus, for the month of March, 1877, the record stood: Preëmption, eleven; homestead declaratory, seventeen; homestead entries, eight; timber culture, thirteen.<sup>18</sup> On May 3, 1878, the *Edwards County Leader* remarked that five-eighths of the available acreage was government and the remainder Santa Fe railroad land. Near the end of April, 1877, the report was that more than one hundred persons had settled over the river and all government land was taken along the Comanche county road southward to within a few miles of the Rattlesnake.<sup>19</sup> By the end of the year a similar

16. The *Kinsley Weekly Mercury*, August 18, 1887.

17. "Kansas State Census," 1875. Single adults were counted as families for census purposes.

18. *Edwards County Leader*, Kinsley, April 3, 1877.

19. *Ibid.*, April 26, 1877.

report was published regarding government land between Kinsley and the Sawlog or South Fork of the Pawnee.<sup>20</sup>

The state census data of 1875 show an average age for eighty farm operators of 36.5 years, and for their wives of thirty-four years. The age distributions are given in the table and show comparatively few in the twenties, the largest group being in the thirties, although twenty percent of the men were forty-five or above, or almost exactly the same proportion as were below thirty. The eldest was sixty-five and the youngest man or woman was twenty-two. The separation of single from married men emphasizes that sixteen of the nineteen in the twenty-year-old group were single and that twenty-seven of the thirty-five of the thirty-year-old group were married. In other words, the permanent backbone of this frontier was not young married couples starting life and expecting to grow up with the country, but rather middle-aged people with families. Twenty-nine families had sixty-two children of their own, or about two per family, besides a total of five other children being raised in these families.

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF FARM OPERATORS AND WIVES

Age Groups	Farm Operators	Women	Single Men	Married Men
21-24 .....	10	7	9	0
25-29 .....	9	6	7	3
30-34 .....	20	15	7	13
35-39 .....	15	11	1	14
40-44 .....	10	4	3	7
45-49 .....	3	2	0	3
50-54 .....	5	2	2	3
55-59 .....	5	1	3	2
60-64 .....	3	1	0	3
	80	48	32	48

The sources of Edwards county population as of 1875 were somewhat unusual. Of seventy men whose place of birth was recorded thirty-four were born in New England, mostly in upper New England, and nineteen of the forty women. The next largest groups were from the North Atlantic states, and foreign born from Germany, England and Ireland. Forty-eight of the seventy men came to Kansas from New England, particularly from Massachusetts as their place of last residence, and the next largest group, seventeen in number, came from the North Central states east of the Mississippi river. Only three of the sixteen foreign born came direct from the

20. *The Valley Republican*, Kinsley, December 16, 1878.

country of birth, and nineteen of fifty-four native-born men and eleven of thirty women came direct from their birth states.

The agricultural schedules of the county for the census of 1875 recorded the crop program of seventy-two farms. Of these, sixty-four farmers planted corn that spring, averaging thirteen acres each; twenty-six farmers averaged eight acres each of winter wheat planted in the fall of 1874 and one farmer planted spring wheat in 1875; sixteen farmers planted barley and twelve planted oats, in each case an average of three acres. Of other crops, three farmers planted rye and one farmer each planted sorghum, millet, potatoes and sweet potatoes. On ten farms orchards had been started. Unquestionably, corn was the predominant crop, and twenty-five farmers planted nothing else, the corn acreages on these farms ranging from three to ten acres. Even if the season had been favorable, which it was not, the county would not have produced enough grain to feed itself.

The livestock equipment of these farms consisted of seventy-eight horses distributed among thirty-eight operators, supplemented by eight mules on five farms; sixty cows scattered among twenty-nine owners; seventy-two other cattle among twenty-six owners; and twenty-nine hogs among eleven owners. Four farmers owned sheep, but most of the 419 sheep and 1,270 pounds of wool were credited to two men. No livestock of any kind was listed on twenty-five farms. Three farmers reported poultry or eggs sold, and eight a total of 830 pounds of butter made during the preceding year. Clearly, the meat supply was as deficient as the grain supply.

Although the dollar figures for the value of machinery equipment of farms may not be reliable, yet their general significance is inescapable. Thirty-five farmers reported no machinery, while thirty-seven reported an average value of about \$26. The total value of personal property listed was \$10,952 distributed among forty-nine farmers, the smallest being \$5 and the largest \$84, with an average of \$226. Twenty-one listed no personal property. In view of the deficiencies in other respects this item was more favorable than might be expected, as twenty-five of the whole number reported \$200 worth or over.

During the first winter after the main bodies of colonists arrived (1873-1874) many were destitute. Appeals were made to the President of the United States for aid to be distributed from army stores at Fort Larned, but requests were denied as congress had not pro-

vided supplies for that purpose. Gov. Thomas A. Osborn wrote to one group of settlers under the date of December 20, 1873, saying that he understood that a local relief board was functioning at Petersburg under the direction of Capt. P. H. Niles, who would give aid in case of necessity. No further information has been forthcoming regarding this situation, but the reference to Niles suggests that possibly the source of funds was the Boston organization which had sponsored the Massachusetts colony.

In the season of 1874 the drought, followed by the grasshopper scourge, added to the distress which would in all probability have been serious enough in this primitive plains settlement because the nation as a whole was in the depths of economic depression. A state relief committee as well as the federal government through the various army posts distributed food, clothing and coal. On December 13, 1874, C. L. Hubbs, who had been appointed by Governor Osborn to act in Edwards county, reported to the governor that fifty-nine persons were in need. In view of the fact that there were only 234 persons in the county, this would indicate that one-fourth of the population was on the list. The Santa Fe railroad advanced seed wheat in the fall of 1874 to settlers along its line, allowing a maximum of fifteen bushels per farm. Not until 1876 did the county begin to show signs of recovery, but by 1877 immigrants were coming into the region in large numbers.<sup>21</sup>

It is evident that the organization of Edwards county was accomplished by means of a fraudulent census, and for some reason it was allowed to stand, although the legislature declined to seat the representative until 1877. Without rivers to afford natural facilities for transportation, the railroad had been the necessary preliminary to settlement as applying to the whole sub-humid West. That fact has been rather generally recognized by historians, but an equally important one not clearly understood is that so small a population and so little property could not have maintained either the settlement itself or a local government had it not been for the railroad. In 1877 J. A. Walker called attention to the distribution of property holdings in the county. The railroad valuation constituted over eighty-six percent of the whole.

21. Official correspondence concerning relief is found in "Correspondence of Kansas Governors" (Archives division, Kansas State Historical Society). The records of the Kansas Central Relief Committee, 1874-1876, in the possession of the Historical Society, contain material on the relations of that organization to Edwards county.

## TAXABLE PROPERTY OF EDWARDS COUNTY, 1877

Santa Fe railroad and its subsidiary the Arkansas Valley Town Co...	\$380,000
Business men.....	10,000
Nonresidents .....	10,000
Residents .....	40,000
	\$440,000

Nonresident property was negligible and resident property was mostly personal rather than real estate and was mostly lost to taxation because of legal exemptions. It was pointed out that home-steaders would avail themselves of the maximum time of seven years to prove up and take patents and only then would their land become taxable. Preemptors would take advantage of the grasshopper law which extended the time for making payments so that such land would not generally become taxable until 1879.<sup>22</sup> There is probably no exaggeration therefore in the contemporaneous statement that the railroad took "the burden of the taxes off the farmers and producers. The company pays about 95 percent of the taxes."<sup>23</sup>

The particular occasion for bringing this situation out into the open was the controversy over the voting of bonds for a courthouse and jail. An "Old Settler" argued that there were not enough people; that the most of the county lay across the river and the settlers had not been there long enough to qualify for voting; and that later it might be desirable to remove the county seat to some point across the river nearer the center of the county.<sup>24</sup> The answer of Kinsley to any suggestion of taking the county seat across the river requires no comment. The editor of the *Leader* advocated forcefully the cause of the courthouse, insisting that rentals and expense of transporting prisoners to Great Bend would meet the interest on the necessary bonds. Referring to the voting of bonds for the bridge, he stated:

Then, as well as now, the greater part of the taxes in Edwards county was paid by the railroad land company, and it was expected that said company would object to the building of a bridge until the prospects looked more favorable but not so, when counseled, they said build your bridges, make your improvements throughout the county, and although we pay the bulk of the taxes, all we want is clean hands, economy and no stealing on the part of county officials.

On the courthouse question he declared:

We have no fears of the railroad land company objecting and if they do not, why should we. It will be a long time before those who have taken Govern-

22. *Edwards County Leader*, Kinsley, July 26, 1877.

23. *Ibid.*, May 3, 1877.

24. *Ibid.*, May 21, 1877.

ment land or before those that may take, will have to prove up and in the meantime the railroad company will be taxed from year to year for the payment of the bonds issued, and many of the old settlers as well as the new ones will find when the proper time comes for proving up their claims, that by the judicious management of our county officials, in the year 1877, that the public buildings have all been erected and that they are in possession of good farms with no taxes to pay for such improvement.<sup>25</sup>

No statement has been found from an official of the Santa Fe railroad or of its subsidiary land company, and there is no means of knowing whether the editor of the *Leader* may have been under obligations to the company and may have been speaking under inspiration, but however that may have been, all of the independent facts available point to the conclusion that the general picture of the situation was essentially true, although in specific detail it may have been overstated.<sup>26</sup> J. A. Walker's statement was that rentals and other expenses were costing \$1.13 per thousand, while the direct levy would be about \$1.82 per thousand, or a net increase in taxes of 69 cents per thousand.<sup>27</sup> The county treasurer's printed statement of the tax rate for 1877 was:

For state of Kansas.....	0.55
Edwards county .....	1.00
Kinsley township .....	0.15
Trenton township .....	0.10
County poor .....	0.10
Bridge bonds .....	0.20
School district No. 1 .....	1.10
School district No. 1 bonds.....	0.40
School district No. 2 .....	1.00
School district No. 2 bonds.....	0.60
School district No. 3 .....	1.00
School district No. 4 .....	0.50
School district No. 5 .....	1.30 <sup>28</sup>

On petition of July 7, the county commissioners ordered an election to be held August 4, 1877, on the question of the issuance of \$8,000 in courthouse and jail bonds. The proposition was defeated, and apparently very badly, because the *Leader* recorded the momentous event with a three-line local and a cut of a sick rooster, but no figures or comment.<sup>29</sup>

On the basis of experience, the agricultural system was under-

25. *Ibid.*, May 31, 1877.

26. Most of the county records burned in a town fire in 1879 so that the author has not been able to verify specific figures given except as they appear in the public prints. Some of them seem contradictory in detail, but without changing the larger aspects of the matter.

27. *Edwards County Leader*, Kinsley, July 26, 1877.

28. *Ibid.*, November 8, 1877.

29. *Ibid.*, July 19, August 9, 1877.

going some modification and especially with the temporary turn of more favorable climatic conditions. As the following table shows, winter wheat increased rapidly, but as time was to demonstrate, not in fulfillment of hopes for this crop. The Early Red May, a soft wheat, did not prove altogether successful, although it was the best variety then given any widespread trial in the area. Spring wheat and barley had a substantial following, but oats made comparatively little headway. Clearly, corn was still the principal crop in the county. Among the new crops that showed promise were millet, broomcorn and sorghum. This early experiment with sorghum was significant, because it was not a native of the Western hemisphere, had been introduced only recently, and was soon to prove one of the most reliable of the Plains crops. It is evident that by 1878 only the beginnings had been made in the baffling problem, still only partially solved, of adaptation of the agricultural system to the sub-humid environment.

ACREAGE IN FIELD CROPS, EDWARDS COUNTY, 1875-1878.<sup>30</sup>

CROP	1875	1876	1877	1878
Winter wheat . . . . .	202	524	701	2,205
Spring wheat . . . . .	4	39	283	1,460
Oats . . . . .	39	65	148	504
Barley . . . . .	46	158	529	1,273
Corn . . . . .	855	1,229	1,770	2,908
Sorghum . . . . .	0.5	18	41	73
Broomcorn . . . . .	0	2	32	47
Millet and Hungarian . . . . .	0	21	123	724

#### II. J. A. WALKER'S EARLY HISTORY OF EDWARDS COUNTY

The first recorded account of the territory now embraced in Edwards county, Kansas, is no doubt found in an old book edited by Moses, and brought to this country in the *Mayflower*, by John Bradford, several copies of which are still believed to be extant in Kansas. Nothing more is certainly known of the country until about the middle of the sixteenth century, when Coronado, with a band of Spanish adventurers raided through it in search of the land of Havileh, where there is gold referred to by Moses. Failing to penetrate far enough west, he sadly retraced his steps, and for three hundred years this country remained a *terra incognita*.

[In the] summer of 1846 Gen. Kearney, with twenty-seven hundred men, marched over these "desolate plains," and took possession of Santa Fe. In May, 1854, congress erected . . . the

30. *First Biennial Report of the State Board of Agriculture* (Topeka, 1878), p. 198.

territory of Kansas.<sup>31</sup> The territorial legislature of Kansas in 1860 provided that all the territory west of the 6th principal meridian, and south of township 18 be known as "Peketon county." In 1867 the legislature blotted Peketon county from the map and formed other counties out of its territory, among which was Pawnee county, which embraced thirteen townships of what is now Edwards county.

In the summer of 1871 the A., T. & S. F. R. R. made preliminary survey for the location of the road through Pawnee and counties west, and the railroad was completed to where Kinsley, Edwards county, now is, about the 1st of August, 1872. During this month a committee representing the "Chicago Workingmen's Colony," among whom were Dr. Sam'l G. Rodgers, Col. C. N. Pratt and Robt. McCance, selected this as the location of their colony, and named it Petersburg, in honor of one of the directors (T. J. Peters) of the A., T. & S. F. R. R., and in October following united with the people of Larned in a petition to the governor to take steps looking to the organization of Pawnee county. F. C. Hawkins, of Larned, was appointed census taker and was believed to have enrolled every man in the county. In November an election was held resulting in the outgeneraling of Doctor Rodgers by the Larned people, and the election of Larned men to fill all the offices. Undismayed, Doctor Rodgers proceeded with his improvements and on the 5th day of December, 1872, the cornerstone of the Buffalo house (the structure now known as the Kinsley hotel) was laid in ample form by Doctor Rodgers and Robt. McCance, between where now is Parker's blacksmith shop and the railroad track, and the building approached completion as rapidly as the Doctor could get trusted for material. About this time the railroad company established a telegraph office at the tank three miles west of Petersburg and Fred. Gardner, the present handsome, efficient and justly popular station agent at Kinsley, was installed as operator; about this time also A. D. Clute was prospecting about Petersburg, having become a member of the "Workingmen's colony." In February, 1873, the telegraph office and operator were removed to Petersburg, and the Buffalo house had been sided, and on March 10th, 1873, Messrs. M. D. Hetzel and A. D. Clute occupied it (it was already open, being *sans* roof, doors and windows) as a hotel, and the railroad trains stopped at Kinsley for meals.<sup>32</sup> Mrs. Clute was hostess, and Messrs. H. & C. soon had

31. The omission is an erroneous description of the boundary.

32. The railroad ran through the townsite diagonally from northeast to southwest, and the depot was north of the head of the belt of Sixth street. The first buildings were also on the north side near the depot and to the northward opposite the courthouse square.

doors and windows to the house, partitions inside, a bridal chamber, hung with tapestry (?) and a roof upon the house and presently a hotel second to none other west of Topeka for the quality and variety of its *cuisine* and for courteous attention to guests—exit Doctor Rodgers.

Prior to the building of the Buffalo house, Sam'l E. Fay and family had come to this country and had located near Nettleton and are now living on the section 6, town 24, range 18, and may properly be considered the oldest inhabitants of Edwards county. One of their children was buried near Nettleton in October, 1872.

In March, 1873, Messrs. Wentworth, E. K. Smart, T. L. Rodgers, E. W. Griggs and W. F. Blanchard, representing the Massachusetts colony, from Boston, located the colony at Petersburg, and built three colony houses near the railroad track, just west of where the Kinsley house now stands. Morrison, of Grasshopper Falls, built a two-story structure just north of the Buffalo house, and N. C. Boles, now postmaster of Hutchinson, opened out a stock of drugs, and was appointed postmaster. There being one postoffice named Petersburg in Kansas, this office was named Peters. Subsequently, Boles sold out to J. W. Jenkins, who put in a stock of groceries and on the resignation of Boles, succeeded him as postmaster. Jenkins razed the building and it is now doing duty at the corner of Marsh and Sixth street. W. F. Blanchard and F. C. Blanchard built houses on section 8, town 25, range 19, the first frame dwelling houses built in Edwards county. T. L. Rodgers built a store on the south side of the track and opened out a stock of groceries. Subsequently he removed across the track and enlarged his store, ultimately selling out to Wm. Emerson. E. K. Smart opened up a lumber yard, which he subsequently sold out to W. C. Edwards. Wentworth settled in Harvey county, and E. H. Griggs returned to Boston. In April, 1873, a goodly number of colonists arrived; among whom were Capt. Niles, N. L. Humphrey, F. H. Fall, H. P. Merwin, John A. Brothers, J. T. North, F. C. Badger, M. Moar, L. W. Higgins, Briggs Monroe, J. H. Murphrey, Robert Henderson, C. N. Bonner, L. H. Dudley, J. A. Walker, Jas. Wilson, Frank Spring, Jr., many of them with families, and with the exception of F. H. Fall, still stick.

In May, 1873, the townsite of Petersburg was surveyed and platted and W. C. Knight erected the first dwelling house at the corner of Third street and Colony avenue north, now owned and occupied by Capt. J. A. Freeland. The legislature having readjusted

the boundaries of Pawnee county in March, 1873, and left thirteen townships out in the cold, unattached to any county or judicial district, "We, the people" of these thirteen townships, organized themselves as a city of the third class and elected F. H. Fall, mayor, J. A. Walker, Fred Gardner, M. D. Hetzel, T. L. Rodgers and W. B. Pattison, councilmen, M. Moar, police judge, and Robert McCance, marshal, which organization was maintained until this territory was attached to the 9th judicial district the winter following—the courts adjudicated but two cases during that time and the organization levied no taxes and paid its own expenses. F. H. Fall went "west to grow up with the country" June 30. The city was named Peter's City, in honor of Capt. Peter H. Niles, resident agent of the New England Homestead and Colonization Bureau (which had succeeded to the effects of the Massachusetts colony) and agent for the sale of the railroad land. Taylor Flick, Esq., the pioneer lawyer of the county, made the first entry of government land in the county and subsequently bought the railroad interest in the townsite.

In June, 1873, Col. C. N. Pratt, interested alike in the Workingmen's colony and the Massachusetts colony, came to Petersburg as the representative of Mrs. Elizabeth Thompson, a wealthy lady of New York and sister of Geo. W. Rowell, now of this county, proposing to build a hall for the use of the citizens, Mrs. Thompson contributing therefor the sum of \$1,500 and the railroad company giving the lot. The hall was built and was subsequently used as a schoolroom and for public uses, but through some misunderstanding she finally deeded it to her nephew, Alonzo Rowell, who ultimately sold it and it was converted into a hotel, the present Eureka house, now under the popular management of W. F. Blanchard.<sup>33</sup>

A meeting of citizens was held and it was voted that the name of Petersburg should be changed to Kinsley, in honor of Hon. Ed. W. Kinsley, of Boston.<sup>34</sup> In September, 1873, Mrs. A. L. McGinnis, sister to Mrs. W. F. Blanchard and F. C. Blanchard, issued the first number of the *Kinsley Reporter*, a spicy little newspaper which she continued to publish until it was merged into the *Edwards County Leader*, W. T. Bruer purchasing her press and type in January, 1877. Mrs. McGinnis also succeeded J. W. Jenkins as post-

33. In 1877 the Eureka house stood on Massachusetts avenue, between Third and Fourth streets. Advertisement in the *Edwards County Leader*, March 29, 1877.

34. The last and apparently the only visit of Kinsley to the town bearing his name was described in a local item in the *Kinsley Graphic*, May 18, 1878. He was in town a few hours on May 16, and the *Graphic* reported: "Mr. Kinsley is a true type of the busy, bustling Bostonian."

master, a position she still holds; she also taught the first school in the county, beginning in September, 1873, and continuing three months. Her school numbered ten pupils.

In the fall of 1873, Geo. W. Rowell, his son Alonzo, and his daughter, wife of Marion Sowards, and their families, with several other families, arrived by teams from Wisconsin, C. L. Hubbs from Minnesota, and later Geo. H., his brother, with their families, by railway. A. L. Kendall also made his first appearance.

Taylor Flick, Esq., Robert McCance, Capt. P. H. Niles and C. L. Hubbs interested themselves in the winter in having the legislature erect these thirteen townships, with such others as could be had, into a county, and the legislature formed these townships, together with four others on the south, into a county which they named Edwards, in honor of W. C. Edwards, of Hutchinson, and senior partner of the present house of Edwards Bros., at Kinsley.

In May, 1874, a movement was set on foot to obtain an organization of the county, and Robert McCance was appointed by the governor as census-taker. [On] July 10, 1874, he made his return reporting only 301 inhabitants; the law requiring not less than 600 inhabitants to perfect an organization. This spring (1874) Major Geo. Bill of Wisconsin, added materially to the prosperity and population of the county, himself and family numbering twelve souls. Several enterprising Germans also took claims seven or eight miles south of Kinsley, among whom were Wm. Plag, Jr., his father and two brothers.

Mr. D. Hetzel sold out his hotel interest to Mr. Clute, and became a first-class "granger," having one of the best farms in the valley.

John A. Brothers sowed some spring wheat and raised the first wheat in Edwards county, and was the only man in Edwards county who "breaded" himself from his crop that grasshopper season.

Some of the citizens being dissatisfied with the result of McCance's enumeration of inhabitants in Edwards county petitioned the governor for the appointment of another census-taker, and through the influence of C. L. Hubbs another enumeration was made, and returns made in August, 1874, of 633 inhabitants. This latter enumeration is believed to have been *all* the men, women and children in Edwards county at that time. The governor issued his proclamation and appointed C. L. Hubbs, N. L. Humphrey, G. W. Wilson, commissioners, and J. A. Walker, clerk, August 21, 1874.

This summer "Lo" was on the war path, and a squad of soldiers under Lieut. Campbell, U. S. A., were stationed near the depot.

The Congregational church was organized with eleven members, and assistance promised from Boston, in building a church, which was subsequently fulfilled by the building of the present church edifice. The first preaching in the county was at the Buffalo house, Sunday, June 1, 1873, Rev. S. D. Storts officiating.

In September, 1874, the foundation of the brick block of Edwards Bros., was laid and the building was completed during the winter.<sup>35</sup> It was not occupied as a store by the Edwards Bros., until March, 1876, the grasshopper raid and the Indian war having retarded the growth of the county at least two years. In October, 1874, the citizens organized a militia company under the laws of Kansas, and October 21, Capt. Emerson was commissioned captain, Geo. H. Hubbs, first lieutenant, and T. L. Rodgers second lieutenant. They were not called into active service.

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At the November election in 1874 the regular county officers were chosen. C. L. Hubbs, representative, over A. L. Kendall, his competitor, 46 votes to 35 for Kendall; T. L. Rodgers, John A. Brothers, F. C. Blanchard, commissioners; Wm. Emerson, county clerk; E. A. Boyd, treasurer; L. W. Higgins, register of deeds; Jonas Woods, clerk of the district court; V. D. Billings, sheriff; J. S. Perry, coroner; W. C. Knight, superintendent of public instruction; Taylor Flick, county attorney; M. Moar, probate judge; Frank A. White, county surveyor. C. L. Hubbs failed to obtain his seat as a representative, but was admitted as a delegate in the legislature.

The original board of county commissioners divided the county into three townships, naming them, respectively, Kinsley, Trenton and Brown—the latter having but nine votes and no immediate prospect of an increase, the new board of county commissioners attached Brown township to Trenton and made but two townships: Kinsley and Trenton. Late in the session of the legislature Mr. Hubbs obtained the passage of a law defining the boundaries of Brown township in Edwards county and the board of county commissioners promptly re-adjusted the township lines and again divided the county into two townships still leaving Brown township a part of Trenton.

The Roman Catholic church perfected an organization, Father F. P. Swemberg officiating.

The march of improvement was not rapid in 1875 for causes stated. Ten townships had been added to the south of the county

<sup>35</sup> The Edwards Bros. brick store was south of the track and in the first block east of the Sixth street crossing on the northeast corner of the block at Sixth and Main.

by the legislature, and a term of court had been established also beginning in June, 1875. Litigation had been mildly begun before the justices of the peace, the first civil case being Emerson vs. Niles, before D. P. Daniel, justice of the peace of Trenton township, followed immediately by a criminal case: State of Kansas vs. Emerson, before J. A. Walker, justice of the peace, of Kinsley township. Prior to the organization of Edwards county it was attached to Pawnee county for judicial purposes.

Upon the establishment of a district court for Edwards county, cases arising in Edwards county and then pending in the district court of Pawnee county were transferred to the docket of the district court of Edwards county. The civil cases of C. L. Hubbs vs. A. S. Simmons, and A. L. Kendall vs. A. S. Simmons, and the criminal case of State of Kansas vs. S. B. Haines, were those transferred and came up for hearing at the June term of 1876, Hon. S. R. Peters, judge. The Buffalo house was removed from its original location (having previously been sold, under the foreclosure of the numerous liens for lumber and labor existing upon it, to W. C. Edwards and A. D. Clute), to its present location and by the owners extensively improved and rechristened the Kinsley house, in [the] spring of 1876.<sup>36</sup>

Late this fall (1875) or in the winter of (1875-'6) Messrs. Ott, Offerle and others, substantial and enterprising citizens of Henry county, Illinois, prospected the county and fixed upon the present site of Offerle as a desirable point at which to start a town, and in the spring, 1876, made a beginning, the result of which cannot but be flattering to their wisdom, judgment and sagacity. J. W. Edwards was subsequently appointed postmaster. Some of the finest farms and most substantial farmers in the great Arkansas valley are located about and near Offerle.

During the spring, 1876, R. E. Edwards, brother to W. C., opened out a large stock of general merchandise, lumber, &c., and started the Edwards county bank, occupying the two stores now occupied by Edwards Bros. and Edwards Bros. & Price. R. B. Martin, from Wisconsin, built his house and stable and subsequently opened out the lumber yard now run by Martin & Kelley. W. R. Davis & Co., opened out a grocery store where now is the "great western bakery," corner of Marsh avenue and Sixth street. Walter Robley, of Illinois, and T. P. German ("Joe"), formerly post guide at Fort Dodge and

36. The new location must have been at or near the northwest corner of the Edwards Bros. block at Colony and Sixth.

a well-known scout, built and stocked the stable now owned and occupied by the Robley Bros. Keller Johnsee built and occupied the building now owned and occupied by Geo. Rummell as a harness shop. C. L. Hubbs built and occupied the building now used by him as a real estate and law office. "Thompson hall" was remodeled, somewhat enlarged and improved and painted by the owners, Barnett & Thormand, and opened out as the "Eureka house," by P. M. Jones, now postmaster at Nettleton. The Kinsley house again underwent more extensive repairs, still continuing under the skilled and popular management of Mr. & Mrs. A. D. Clute. At the November election, 1875, Taylor Flick was elected representative; Geo. Bill, Wm. Plag, Jr., and F. C. Blanchard, county commissioners; Wm. Emerson, clerk; N. L. Humphrey, treasurer; Robert McCause, sheriff; J. S. Perry, coroner; C. L. Hubbs, surveyor; L. W. Higgins, register of deeds; P. M. Jones, clerk of the district court; James Woods having resigned the position of clerk of the district court in the spring of 1875, W. C. Reed was appointed to fill the vacancy, and at the November election P. M. Jones was elected for one year. The total number of votes polled was seventy-eight. The population of Edwards county, as determined by census May 1, 1875, was 234, of which 138 were males and 96 females. W. C. Knight taught two terms of school in Thompson hall before it was converted into a hotel.

School district No. 1 was organized [in] August, 1874, and in the summer of 1876 voted \$4,000 in bonds for the erection of a schoolhouse, resulting in the erection of the present brick schoolhouse, 35 x 40, two stories high and containing four spacious rooms and was occupied for school purposes in June, 1877, prior to which, in the summer of and fall of 1876, two terms of school were held in the church building, Miss Zona Kinminis and J. W. Edwards teachers. During this summer the county voted \$12,000 bonds for the purpose of bridging the Arkansas river, and early in 1877 the bridge was completed at a cost of about \$9,000. In the winter of 1876-'7 Morgan Jensen, from Wisconsin, built the store now occupied by A. A. Brown on Colony avenue. About the same time C. D. Perrit built and occupied the adjacent building as a grocery store.

At the November election in 1876 Taylor Flick was again elected representative by a majority of twenty-six votes over C. L. Hubbs; J. E. McArthur, county attorney; V. D. Billings, clerk of the district court; W. Kinnions, probate judge and G. W. Milner, superintendent of public instruction. By this election Edwards county

obtained her first recognized right to a representation in the legislature, Mr. Flick having failed to obtain his seat the year previous for lack of a sufficiently large total vote, and Mr. Hubbs having been admitted as a delegate only, in 1875, for a similar reason. G. W. Milner and R. T. Spivey succeeded P. H. Niles as agents for the sale of the railroad land in the summer of 1876, and Milner was himself succeeded by Monroe & Spivey in the fall of 1877, and transferred to the agency for the sale of lands at Garfield, in Pawnee county, with headquarters at Kinsley. In the spring of 1876 Col. W. G. Dickenson, agent of the Arkansas Valley Town company, laid out and plat[t]ed about forty acres addition to Kinsley, south, and many dwelling houses were erected thereon. R. L. Ford, Esq., also made purchases in the summer of a tract of land of the A. V. T. Co., adjoining the addition, south, upon which several dwellings have been erected. In the winter of 1876-'7 and spring following Doctor Freeland built two houses on Colony avenue, north, and later James Byrne, one of the men of '73, purchased and fitted up the dwelling-house on Fifth street, north, now occupied by R. Kirk. A. B. Roundy built the brick storeroom now occupied by Glasgow & Co., as a drugstore. W. Vermillion having previously built the three or four buildings on the adjoining lots south. J. W. Fuller built the building now known as the Valley house, which has been but recently again enlarged. Jacob Schmidt built the meat market adjoining, south. W. T. Bruer succeeded to the good will of the Kinsley *Reporter*, and in March, 1877, issued the first number of the *Edwards County Leader*, which is now said to have a circulation of one thousand copies. One of the papers west of the Missouri that prints both sides of its paper in its own office. In April, 1877, J. E. Willey, Esq., from Philadelphia, built and occupied his store on Colony avenue, south, as a hardware and furniture store and tin shop. He has lately been obliged to build a spacious addition to accommodate his largely increased business. He was elected one of the justices of the peace of Kinsley township in the fall of 1877. During the spring of 1877 also the Fraternal Home and Land Association, of Philadelphia, numbering some thirty families, located south of the river.<sup>37</sup> Messrs. C. S. Ostrander, J. Ferguson, J. Gray, C. and S. Carpenter and several other substantial and enterprising citizens, of New York state, with their families, also located south of the river in the northeast part of the county.<sup>38</sup> During this summer

37. This colony was usually referred to as the Wentz colony.

38. These New York immigrants settled northeast of the present town of Lenoir.

and fall a large number of dwelling-houses, two blacksmith shops, carpenter and painters shops were built on the townsite too numerous to mention in detail. Mrs. A. L. McGinnis, postmistress, removed her house to Marsh avenue, south, and enlarged it sufficiently to make accommodation for the post office. Edwards Bros. & Dudley have recently built a large livery and sale stable on the ten lots adjoining.

*The Valley Republican* was started by M. M. Lewis, Esq., an experienced and accomplished journalist, November 3, 1877, under whose able editorial management it soon claimed a weekly edition of five hundred copies. After publishing seventeen numbers Mr. Lewis "stepped down and out," and it is now under the management of C. L. Hubbs, Mr. Lewis being engaged in the law and real estate business. During this winter, 1877-'8, Messrs. DePuy & Frater have erected a large building on Sixth street as an agricultural warehouse, with a large public hall in the second story. Another two story structure, on Sixth street adjoining the Messrs. DePuy & Frater, is understood to be soon occupied by A. A. Brown. Adjoining it on the west Messrs. Collier & Lane have opened out a meat market. W. R. Davis & Co., grocers, having been succeeded by E. I. Meeker and he in turn by E. I. Meeker & Co., removed to a more commodious building, with large warehouse in the rear between the Kinsley house and Edwards Bros. block, and opened out a large stock as a general merchandise store.

In the summer of 1876 John Fitch, a "live Yankee," purchased a tract of land at Nettleton, this county, seven miles northeast of Kinsley on the railroad, erected a large, three story house, a barn and a windmill for grinding grain, and it is now the center of a large trade.

Edwards county has an area of nine hundred and seventy-three square miles, 737,280 acres of land, of which about 150,000 acres are taxable. Kinsley, the county seat, is in latitude 37 minutes, 58 seconds; longitude 99 minutes, 46 seconds, and with an altitude of 2,220 feet above tide water, mean temperature of three winter months  $32.59^{\circ}$ , of three spring months  $40.79^{\circ}$ , of three summer months  $75.16^{\circ}$ , of three fall months  $53.98^{\circ}$ . The average rainfall from May to November, six months, is about eighteen inches. Maximum extreme of temperature in five years,  $110^{\circ}$ , minimum, same period,  $14^{\circ}$ . The Arkansas river and Coon creek furnished an unlimited water power.<sup>39</sup> No coal is known to exist in the county,

39. This was absurd boasting, but for many years Kinsley boosters kept up the pretense.

but Colorado coal, the best in the world, can be delivered here at less than \$100 per carload, or twelve tons. The growing of artificial timber is being made a success; Capt. C. H. Kirkpatrick, near Nettleton, has a surprisingly fine showing of timber, 20 acres of which will average eight feet in height and consists of cottonwoods at intervals of 12 feet, each intervening 11 feet in the rows having black walnut, osage and willow. Probably the finest tract of artificial timber to be found west of the sixth principal meridian. He has also 21 acres, set out this spring in the same manner, of like varieties. F. C. Badger, three miles northeast of Kinsley, has some that has grown ten feet high the past season. Several kinds of sandstone, and limestone of fine quality for lime, are found. Taylor Flick, Esq., has an osage orange hedge, two years old. Maj. Geo Bill and G. B. Ketelum have an exceptionally fine hedge of the same of one-year's growth.

Major Bill has also ten acres of growing timber, chiefly cottonwood and black walnut, averaging five feet in height, one and two year's growth; he has also ten acres planted with black walnut.

Edwin Bartlett also has ten acres in timber, chiefly cottonwood of one year's growth. Messrs. Bartlett and Badger have, together, upwards of forty-five acres of growing timber, about twelve acres of which were planted this spring.

A. L. Kendall has an "80" fenced with posts and barbed wire.

In January, 1874, C. N. Bonner unearthed about four feet beneath the surface, the remains of some huge animal, one tooth of which was obtained entire and well preserved, and weighed five pounds. A portion of a tusk was also exhumed, three feet in length and five inches in diameter, but crumbled upon exposure to the air.

Mrs. Dr. D. P. Daniels made the first bread from the first home-grown and home-ground wheat in Edwards county in 1874. The first death from natural cause was a child of S. E. Fay, in October, 1872. The first birth, a daughter to Mrs. Simon Cass, in August, 1873. The first marriage, Nellie Chase to Wm. Emerson, April 11, 1874. The first dairy was started by R. S. Williamson, in April, 1877, and he was succeeded by N. L. Mills, who notwithstanding he has living water on his farm, is unable to supply the demand for milk. The first dwelling house (frame) by W. F. Blanchard, in April, 1873. The first entry of government land by Taylor Flick, Esq., March, 1873. The first building erected on the town site of Kinsley, exclusive of buildings on the railroad right of way, by

Taylor Flick, Esq., and now occupied by him as a law office, July, 1873. The first newspaper printed by Mrs. A. L. McGinnis, in September, 1873. The first patent for government land was issued to Miss Fanny Rowe for the SW qr., sec. 20, t. 24, r. 19. The first hotel was opened by M. D. Hetzel and A. D. Clute, March, 1873. The first wheat was raised by John A. Brothers, on sec. 12, t. 24, r. 19, in 1874. The first lathed and plastered house was built by Taylor Flick, in 1874. The first hedge was set by Taylor Flick in 1875. The first brick were burned by W. C. Edwards, in August, 1874. The first schoolhouse was built in the winter of 1876-'77 by school district No. 1. The first Congregational church was organized in July, 1874. The first church edifice was built in the fall of 1874. The first Roman Catholic church was organized in the fall of 1874. The first Methodist church in May, 1877. The first Presbyterian church in August, 1877. The first piano brought to Edwards county was by J. A. Walker, in June, 1873. The first dwelling house on the townsite of Kinsley was built by W. C. Knight, in July, 1873.

The business of the railroad had so largely increased at this station that in March, 1877, Andrew Kingkade was appointed to assist Fred Gardner, the station agent.

At the general election in November, 1877, J. R. Lovell was elected county commissioner for district number one, south of the river; E. H. Hough from district number two, and George Bill from district number three, respectively for one, two and three years; R. L. Ford, county clerk; A. L. Kendall, treasurer; John W. Fuller, sheriff; John G. Thauer, coroner; L. W. Higgins, register of deeds; J. N. Norval, county surveyor; and J. A. Freeland, probate judge. W. R. Kimmons having resigned as probate judge S. T. Reed was appointed by the governor to the vacancy, and Capt. Freeland was elected for one year.

Immediately after taking his office as sheriff, J. W. Fuller sold out the "Fuller house" (now known as the "Valley house") and leased the Kinsley house from Mr. Clute, where he entertains strangers utterly "unaware" of their possible celestial origin, and worthily maintains the former high reputation of the house.

Sunday morning, January 27, 1878, about 3:30 o'clock a.m., a gang of robbers, with blackened faces, attempted to rob the depot and westward bound train at Kinsley, but were thwarted by the vigilance, tact and "sand" of Kingkade, the night operator. Four of them are now believed to be safely secured in the jail at Emporia,

where they have ample leisure to compare the exploits of Kingkade with the "life and exploits of Jack Cade."<sup>40</sup>

No death of any adult person has occurred from acute disease, and but three from chronic diseases, in Edwards county within these five years, though there are four allopathic and one homeopathic physicians located here; and no person has yet been sent to the penitentiary, though eight lawyers and real estate agents each hang out a shingle here.

The valuation of real and personal property in Edwards county for the year 1875 (first year after organization) was \$231,760.75; for 1876, \$419,318.00; for 1877, \$473,809.36. No valuation of real estate was made in 1877, the law of the state providing for the valuation of real estate biennially.

The total bonded indebtedness of the county, including that of school districts, is \$16,925. There are nine organized school districts, inclusive of one "joint district" (Ford and Edwards counties), four of which only have voted bonds, to wit: district No. 1, \$4,000; joint district No. 1, \$1,500; district No. 2, \$1,000; district No. 7, \$425.

Geo. W. Fulton, of Rice county, Kansas, has this day (March 13) bought lot 5, in block 12, in Kinsley for the immediate erection of a steam flouring mill.

Gold, silver and greenbacks and other evidences of wealth that need but to be "remonetized," underlie nearly the entire area of Edwards county, only a few inches beneath the surface. Among the men of '73 and early '74 who struck "leads" the past season were Theo. Carter, thirty-nine bushels winter wheat to the acre, M. D. Hetzel, two hundred and seventy-five bushels of German millet from five acres, forty bushels of rye to the acre, and a small patch of oats at the rate of one hundred and twenty bushels to the acre. John A. Brothers, twenty-two bushels of spring wheat per acre, and sixty bushels of barley per acre. J. T. North, 351 bushels of spring wheat from thirteen acres, and 556 bushels of barley from thirteen acres. Edwin Bartlett and F. C. Badger, sixteen hundred and ninety bushels of barley from forty acres, and twenty-eight bushels of winter wheat per acre. Geo. W. Rowell and Marion Sowards each twenty-eight bushels of winter wheat per acre, and A. Hippler thirty-one bushels of wheat per acre. Frank Spring, Jr., 291 bushels of oats from ten bushels of seed, or upwards of seventy bushels per acre.

<sup>40</sup> The Lawnd paper was so unkind as to accuse Kinsley of planning the robbery for publicity purposes.

Among those who have come here as to a "city of refuge" from the premier (pulmonary complaint) of the "King of Terrors," is E. A. Noble, who came from Beaver county, Pennsylvania, packed in a double barrelled undershirt and numerous other flannel contrivances, an ulster overcoat, cork soled boots, and four yards of muslin, with scarcely sufficient strength to carry it all with the help of a cane, and to whom a toasted cracker and two tablespoonfuls of lime water were a hearty meal, now finds the clothing of the average white man amply sufficient, and wishing to spend a day on the range, himself dons a cardigan jacket, packs his pony with two blankets and four cans of Boston baked beans, slips a flask of something for snake-bite into his pocket, vaults into the saddle without the aid of a stirrup, and gallops away to some cattle ranch to sleep wherever night shall overtake him, equal to the hardiest frontiersman.

Also there is our genial and eloquent county attorney J. E. MacArthur, (asthmatic) who came from Clinton county, Iowa, wheezing like a stern wheeler with forty loaded barges in tow against the stream, now addresses the jury (whenever the other lawyers can get a "corner" on some petty misdemeanor) in stentorian tones that can be heard three blocks away against a norther.

The first jury (six) "sworn to try the case" in this county, were impanelled under the "city organization" in December, 1873. Their names were S. S. Hart, G. W. Wilson, G. W. Rowell, Marion Sowards, Jacob Ramie and John Key. Verdict—"Guilty, with a recommendation to the mercy of the court, (signed) S. S. Hart, foreman."

In January, 1873, Fred Gardner shot six buffalo, with six consecutive shots, from the window of the telegraph office, and in July, 1875, W. F. Blanchard killed the last buffalo known to have been killed in Edwards county.

In April, 1875, the Cheyenne Indians jumped their guard at the agency in the territory. They were trailed and shadowed for days by T. P. (Joe) German, then post guide at Fort Dodge, until the evening of April 28, when he came into Kinsley, and reported that the Indians would probably cross the river near "Lone Tree" sometime during the night. The Indians did so cross about fifteen miles above Kinsley, and stole two horses belonging to — Holden. On the morning of April 29, German, A. L. Kendall, V. D. Billings and G. W. Wilson went up the railroad track and struck the Indians' trail about ten miles west of Kinsley, when Wilson came

back with a dispatch to Fort Dodge for troops. Holden and Wm. Plag, Jr., rode post to Dodge, and troops were promptly sent out from the fort, and the following evening overtook the Indians about thirty miles northwest of Kinsley; but through the shameful inefficiency of the captain (Campbell) commanding, failed to capture them. Captain Campbell was subsequently "permitted to resign."

The writer is indebted to the admirable history of Pawnee county, by Capt. Henry Booth, of Larned, for the facts in relation to Pawnee county, though we take issue with Captain Booth as to the object of Coronado's raid. I am unable to find any mention of Peketon county outside of the territorial records and Captain Booth's history, save a solitary reference thereto in *Kansas Reports*, v. 3, in *Cusick v. Douglas and others*.

In this hastily written sketch of the history of Edwards county some inaccuracies and omissions are inevitable, but it would be strangely incomplete without some acknowledgement of the uniform courtesy and hearty coöperation in assisting to develop the resources of Edwards county, on the part of Col. A. S. Johnson, commissioner of the land department, and the other officers and managers of the A. T. & S. F. R. R. The utmost harmony and good will has at all times existed between them and the citizens and officials of the county.